

REMARKS

Claims 25-30, 33, 35, 37-39, and 41-43 remain pending. Claim 25 is the only independent claim and is reproduced below.

25. A method performed by a plurality of gaming machines linked together, the gaming machines having a plurality of lamps of different colors forming a border running along at least left and right sides of each gaming machine's display, the display for displaying a main game, the method comprising:

receiving signals by each linked gaming machine;

selectively illuminating the lamps of the linked gaming machines running along the left and right sides of each gaming machine's display in a coordinated manner to indicate to players that the gaming machines are linked and share a common feature,

wherein selectively illuminating the lamps in the borders of the linked gaming machines in a coordinated manner to indicate to players that the gaming machines are linked and share a common feature comprises illuminating the lamps in the linked gaming machines to signal the beginning of a competitive game.

It is important in Claim 25 that the "lamps... running along the left and right sides of each gaming machine's display" are not a video display, since controlling video displays on linked gaming machines in a coordinated manner is fairly complex and interferes with the normal information (e.g., a game) displayed on the display screen. Applicant's border lamps are easy to control and do not need to be controlled by any display processor or other complex controller. Construing the term "lamps" to be tiny pixels in a display screen is respectfully submitted to be an incorrect construction of the term in view of the claim language and the specification.

In the final office action, the examiner rejected Claims 25-27, 37-39, and 41-43 as being anticipated by Bennett (WO 00/32286).

The examiner equated color display screens of linked gaming machines with Applicant's claimed "plurality of lamps of different colors forming a border running along at least left and right sides of each gaming machine's display." In Bennett, an animated character appears on the displays of linked gaming machines to identify that the player is

eligible for a tournament (page 13, lines 6-8). The examiner stated that the item 151 in Fig. 19 “is a ‘top box screen’ which the examiner interprets to be plurality of lamps capable of displaying different colors.” The top box display screen is above a screen that displays the main game.

A display screen above another display screen cannot be equated with Applicant’s claimed “lamps of the linked gaming machines running along the left and right sides of each gaming machine’s display.” Since Bennett’s top screen does not run along left and right sides of the main display screen, and pixels in such a display screen cannot be properly construed as being “lamps,” there is no anticipation of any of Applicant’s claims.

Applicant’s lamps on the linked gaming machines and their coordinated illumination to signal the beginning of a competitive game are also not suggested by Bennett. Bennett is limited to displaying information on a display screen, which does not suggest lamps bordering at least left and right sides of a display screen for the main game. Applicant’s border lamps would naturally be controlled separately from displays (displays require complex row-column scanning signals for each pixel), so controlling the border lamps does not require any changing of the image software used to display characters. Such display image software is typically proprietary and could not be revised by a third party without voiding a warranty. Applicant’s border lamps are part of the console and can be controlled completely independently of the software used to control the displays. For example, the casino’s server may control the lamps without interacting with the game’s software.

The lamps also are an exciting alternative to the displays and can extend along the entire border of the display. Bennett’s display can only be above or below the main display.

Further, the lamps provide features such as those recited in Claims 28-30, 33, and 35 that cannot be performed by a display.

Given that Applicant’s lamps and coordinated control are not suggested by Bennett and provide many advantages over Bennett’s animated character, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 25 and its dependent claims are patentable.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 ext. 202.

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Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

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